



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Mission Valley Shooting Club

2. Type of Proposed Action:

- Build a new .22 Rimfire Range and Range House.
- Add a handicap bathroom.
- Add handicap parking area and handicap accessible ramp.
- Improve road and parking to all weather.
- Add archery range with backstops and shooting lanes.
- Construct a drainage berm above ditch.

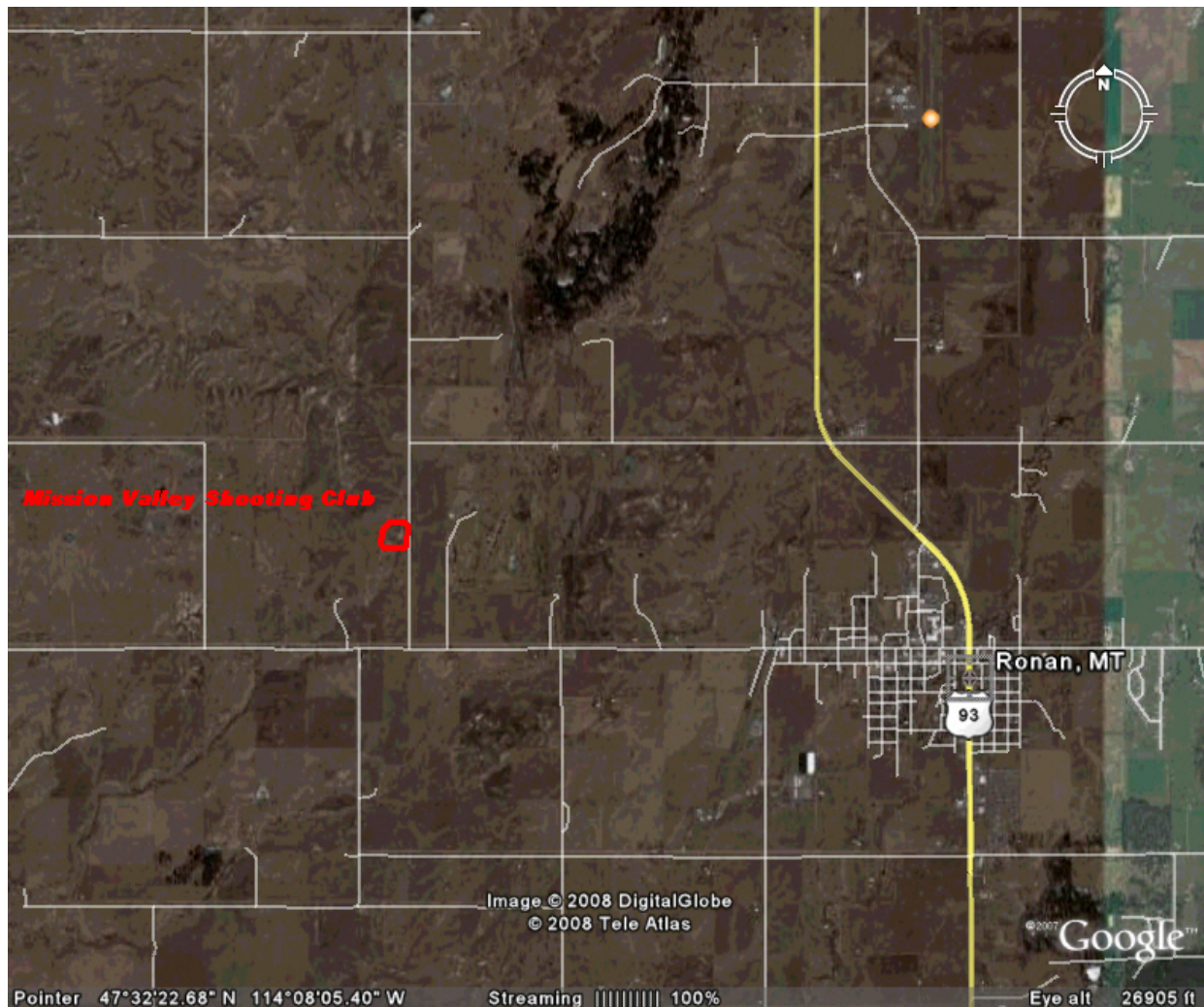
3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: The Mission Valley Shooting Club is located 3.5 miles west of Ronan and 12 miles south of Polson, in Lake County Montana. The range is just north of Round Butte Road and west of Leighton Road. The shooting club property is leased from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Nation in Pablo, MT. It consists of a tract of land located in the E1/2SE1/4NE1/4, and the South 800 feet of the E1/2NE1/4NE1/4, of Section 33, T21N, R20W, P.M.M. and contains approximately 20 acres more or less. See Map 1 for approximate location to Ronan, MT.

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The 2007 Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges for public purposes. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

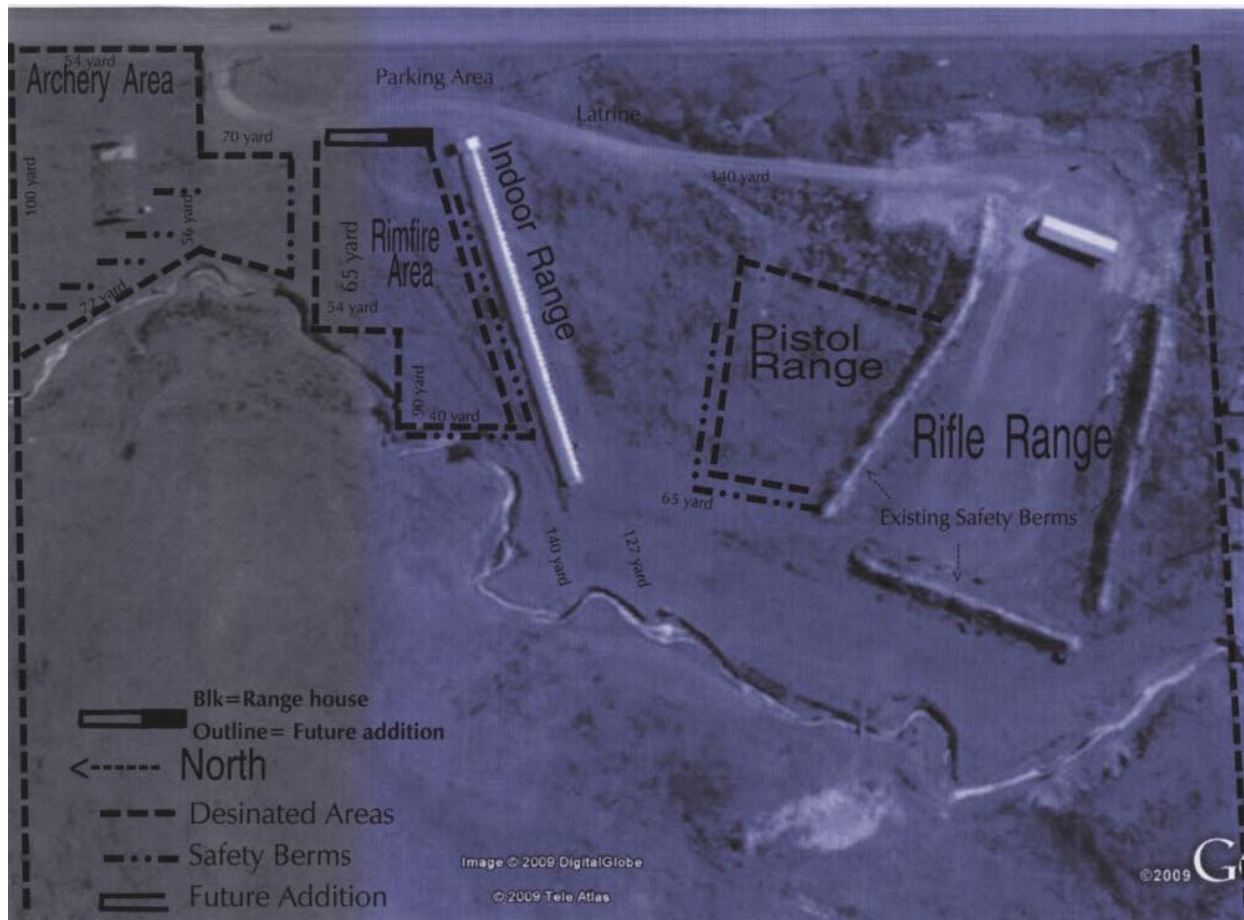
5. Need for the Action(s): There is a need for an outdoor .22 rimfire range and archery range which will accommodate the general public and to also provide handicap access and bathrooms.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): The overall objective is to provide handicap facilities and expand the shooting range(s) to provide a variety of safe shooting opportunities, by providing additional .22 rimfire shooting and archery activities with added handicapped access and facilities. All design and construction objectives are to improve safety through separation of each type of range feature and to provide handicapped accessibility for all range activities.

7. Maps and Supporting Figures:



Map 1 – Mission Valley Shooting Club, Ronan, MT



Map 2 – Mission Valley Shooting Club Range Improvements

8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

The leased area for the range is approximately 20 acres. Improvements have been designed to provide a safe shooting experience within the leased property. (Maps 1 & 2).

9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

The area affected is the existing Mission Valley Shooting Club, which has been in place for approximately 11 years. The historic and present land uses are primarily livestock grazing and the existing shooting range. Miller Coulee runs north to south about 75 yards from the west end of the proposed range site. Although Miller Coulee has flow year round, predominantly from irrigation run off, there are no delineated wetlands on the site. (See Maps 1 & 2). There are inhabited residences adjacent to both the north and south property lines.

10. Description of Project:

[illegible]

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Natural Resources Department (NRD) recommended that berms be placed below and slightly down gradient of the target impact areas. These berms will be constructed below the impact area and above the drainage ditch at a slight down gradient of the target impact areas. These berms will be shaped so as to capture sediments during large rain events and also act as sediment basins.

11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

| Agency Name | Permit |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes – Review of Proposal Approved | |

Funding:

| Agency Name | Funding Amount |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks | \$32,360.00 |

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

The Mission Valley Shooting range is a membership fee range, with daily range and visitor fees. Local law enforcement agencies generally use the range several times a year for qualifications. The local Cowboy action shooting club holds events approximately 3 times per year. Hunter Education classes also use the range for training at least twice a year at no charge. It is anticipated that the new .22 rimfire and archery facilities will increase both Hunter Education, 4-H and Boy Scout activities at the range.

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:

Proposed range improvements proposals have been discussed within the membership of the club and with the associated project vendors and contractors.

14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Tom Fieber
808 7th Street East
Polson, MT 59860
1-406-250-3386

16. Other Pertinent Information:

A letter from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Natural Resources Department (NRD) has determined that no measurable effects or impacts would occur from this project. However, NRD did recommend that berms be placed below and slightly down gradient of the target impact areas and above the drainage ditch. NRD recommended that the berm(s) be shaped so as to capture sediments during large rain events and also to act as sediment basins. This recommendation was incorporated into the Mission Valley Shooting Club proposal.

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 29, 2008

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

| Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to: | Unknown | Potentially Significant | Minor | None | Can Be Mitigated | Comments Below |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------|-------|------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources | | | | X | | |
| 2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats | | | | X | | #2 |
| 3. Introduction of new species into an area | | | | X | | |
| 4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality | | | | X | | |
| 5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater) | | | | X | | #5 |
| 6. Existing water right or reservation | | | | X | | |
| 7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture | | | | X | | |
| 8. Air quality or objectionable odors | | | | X | | |
| 9. Historical & archaeological sites | | | | X | | |
| 10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy | | | | X | | |
| 11. Aesthetics | | | | X | | |

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

2. & 5. There are no delineated wetlands on the property, but a creek (Miller Coulee) that runs north to south through the range. Miller Coulee has water the year around, mostly from irrigation run-off. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Natural Resources Department (NRD) have determined that no measurable effects or impacts would occur from this project. However, NRD recommended that berms be placed below and slightly down gradient of the target impact areas for the larger caliber rifles that may be fired across the drainage ditch. The berms should be shaped so as to capture sediments during large rain events and also act as sediment basins.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

| Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to: | Unknown | Potentially Significant | Minor | None | Can Be Mitigated | Comments Below |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------|-------|------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Social structures and cultural diversity | | | | X | | |
| 2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat | | | | X | | |
| 3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue | | | | X | | |
| 4. Agricultural production | | | | X | | #4 |
| 5. Human health | | | | X | | #5 |
| 6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income | | | | X | | |
| 7. Access to & quality of recreational activities | | | | X | | #7 |
| 8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances) | | | | X | | |
| 9. Distribution & density of population and housing | | | | X | | #9 |
| 10. Demands for government services | | | | X | | |
| 11. Industrial and/or commercial activity | | | | X | | |

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

4. The surrounding land ownership is private and the range is leased from a private party through the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes. Past and present land uses are primarily livestock grazing.

5. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large. The range is fenced with No Trespassing signs and access is through a locked gate.

7. Range will provide year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate law enforcement training, hunter education, and public shooting.

9. The nearest neighbors to the range are adjacent on the north and south boundaries. Additional inhabited residences are East 1/3 Mile and West ½ Mile. In the eleven year history of the range there have not been any significant range conflicts with the neighboring residences or

landowners.

Part III. Environmental Consequences

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:

The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I paragraph 10 (Description of Project) to Build a new .22 Rimfire Range and Range House, with handicap bathroom, parking area, ramp, and sediment berm/basin, also to make the road and parking all-weather, and to add archery range backstops and shooting lanes.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Sports Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active rifle & pistol range without proposed expansion and improvements.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Two alternatives have been considered, **A** (Proposed Alternative) and **B** (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (**A**) nor the no action alternative (**B**) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences to Acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative (A)** increasing shooting sports opportunities on the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribal land and the Ronan area are to Build a new .22 Rimfire Range and Range House, with handicap bathroom, parking area, ramp, and sediment berm/basin, also to make the road and parking all-weather, and to add archery range backstops and shooting lanes.

The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be not to expand the range with additional shooting opportunities and to continue on with present shooting activities and facilities. Land use would remain the same. Present activities include a rifle & pistol range, without proposed additions and improvements.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

NONE

List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations):

NONE

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Tom Fieber, 808 7th Street East, Polson, MT 59860

Jim Vashro, Regional Fish Manager, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Kalispell

Michael Durglo, Jr., Water Quality Regulatory Specialist, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, PO Box 278, Pablo, MT 59855

PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on property leased from The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and have been reviewed and approved by the Tribal Natural Resource Department. The low impact activities proposed, and the increased recreational opportunity, all indicate that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative (A). The 11 year history of the Mission Valley Shooting Club providing shooting opportunities to its members and the public indicates support for the proposed alternative. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the modernization and expansion proposals outlined in Part I, paragraphs 2 & 10.

EA prepared by: GENE R. HICKMAN
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: July 13, 2009

PART V. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

None required.

Describe public involvement, if any:

Announcement for EA comment will be published in the Valley Journal and on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website to allow an opportunity for public review. Public comment will end October 29, 2009.